MEDIA RELEASE
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New opportunities for Catholic secondary school middle leaders

A renewed emphasis on Catholic secondary school middle leadership in Cairns will result in more than 150 school leadership positions being advertised in coming weeks.

Under an industrial award restructure the existing system of Positions of Added Responsibility (PARs) in Catholic secondary schools will be replaced by a new Middle Leadership structure.

Announcing the move, Cairns Catholic Education Services Executive Director, Br Paul Hough, said the existing PAR system was established in 1992 and largely reflected a focus on tasks and administration.

“PARs served us well but it is now time to reflect the growing importance of middle leadership in schools particularly the role these leaders play in managing and leading staff,” he said.

“We see middle leadership as an area where our secondary schools can really shine through the energy, skills and commitment of these key staff members. And in time they will be the school principals of the future.”

Br Paul acknowledged this would be the start of an uncertain period for many school staff currently employed as PARs, whom he encouraged to apply for the new positions.

“All people who are not successful in reapplying for their position are guaranteed employment within their school. Most particularly with Year 7 joining the secondary schools next year there will be additional staff required so while some people may not get their position of responsibility, they’re certainly guaranteed a position within the school.

“Within the diocese, once we have appointed the people in these roles to commence in 2015, we’ll offer training and support to them in the second half of this year so that they are better equipped to lead from 2015 on,” Br Paul said.

“But we also see this as a great opportunity for others considering a career in school leadership to apply for the new roles. They may already be employed at our colleges but they might also currently be anywhere in Australia and looking for a career and lifestyle change,” he said.

Br Paul has entrusted the task of overseeing the process to Assistant Executive Director Secondary School Development, Shane Hogan.

“This is one the most exciting opportunities in education that has come along in many generations,” Mr Hogan said. “We are moving on from what was appropriate in the 1990s to how we want schools to respond to the challenges of the first half of a new century.”

He said the new Middle Leadership structure and appropriate time release attempted to come to terms with that shifting paradigm – appropriately recognising and elevating the importance of Middle Leaders to school success.

“It’s a move to add to the current role the important skill of leadership, so apart from managing curriculum or being a year Co-ordinator, it’s also managing and offering active leadership to the staff – the teachers who teach curriculum – and the teachers who offer pastoral care to the students.”
Mr Hogan said the timing of the move was most appropriate with all Year 7s across all systems joining secondary schools next year.

“In terms of teaching methods for Year 7, in terms of pastoral care, in terms of an overall school curriculum program which now encompasses students from Year 7 through to Year 12; this is the ideal time to change that leadership structure and the initiatives that are given to curriculum and pastoral care.”

The award change was one that applied only to Catholic schools, he said.

“The unions and the employers two years ago sat down and worked this through together. It is a joint initiative by the union and the Catholic employers of Queensland and very much supported by both.”

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